

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022*

**Remarks on the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection in Los Angeles, California**

*June 10, 2022*

Well, hello, everyone. My problem is, I'm getting to like these people too much. *[Laughter]* We're going to get one another in trouble, I'm afraid.

Today the leaders on this stage are joining together to make what—and is almost—it's an overused phrase in international relations and public life: to make a historic commitment. Because it is a historic commitment we're about to make: 20 countries coming together to launch the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection.

With this declaration, we're transforming our approach to managing migration in the Americas. Each of us—each of us—is signing up to commitments that recognizes the challenges we all share and the responsibility that impacts on all of our nations. And that will take all of our nations—and this is—I've learned by significant experience—it's going to take all of our nations working together in partnership to address this migration issue.

The past few years, the global economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 pandemic, and now made worse by Russia's war in Ukraine and the political turmoil from auto—from—excuse me, autocracies, regimes in our region, has led to record levels of migration, not just to the United States. Colombia has hosted millions of refugees from Venezuela. Right now migrants make up as much as 10 percent of the population of Costa Rica.

And no nation should bear this responsibility alone, in my view—our view. The economic futures depend on one another—each of our futures depend on one another. And our security is linked in ways that I don't think most people in my country fully understand, and maybe not in your countries as well. Our common humanity demands that we care for our neighbors by working together.

The Los Angeles Declaration is built around four core pillars: first, stability and assistance, making sure communities that are welcoming refugees can afford to care for them, to educate them in their education, medical care, shelter, and job opportunities; second, increasing pathways for legal migration throughout the region as well as protections for refugees; third, working together to implement a more humane and coordinated border management systems; and finally, making sure we're working together to respond to emergencies.

You know, we know that safe, orderly, and legal migration is good for all our economies. But we need to halt the dangerous and unlawful ways people are migrating and the dangerous ways. Unlawful migration is not acceptable, and we'll secure our borders, including through innovative, coordinated actions with our regional partners.

Working these efforts simultaneously though—humane policies that secure borders and support people—representing groundbreaking, integrated new approaches. It addresses the needs of vulnerable migrants and the needs of countries hosting those migrants. That's why it has the support of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. And that's why so many nations—again, 20, representing the entire migration route from Chile to Canada—were eager to sign up to be part of this shared solution and have stepped up with their own major commitments.

I particularly want to thank President Chaves of Costa Rica and President Lasso—who you'll hear from in a minute—of Ecuador for your new commitments to support and protect migrants in your countries so you have the chance to stay and begin to rebuild your lives where they are.

And like many others, countries and the United States are stepping up with significant commitments as well. To help our partners in the region continue to welcome refugees and migrants, we're providing economic support. For example, more than \$300 million in new funding for humanitarian assistance for countries in the region so when migrants arrive on their doorstep, they can provide a place to stay, make sure migrants can see a doctor, find opportunities to work so they don't have to undertake the dangerous journey north.

And we're going to provide millions more, including through the World Bank, to support countries and communities that are carrying the greatest responsibility for migrants. For example, Colombia received \$800 million last year—not enough, but \$800 million, that will help respond to the influx of refugees from Venezuela. And there's more we'll do, working with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

We're also expanding opportunities for people to come to the United States lawfully. In the next 2 years, we'll resettle 20,000 refugees from the region. In addition, we recently resumed the Cuban Family Reunification Program—Parole Program. We're resuming increasing access to the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program, with a goal of admitting 20,000 per year per country.

And on this jobs front, our Department of Agriculture is launching a pilot program, funded by the American Rescue Plan, to help American farmers bring in seasonal agricultural workers from northern Central America, countries under the H-2A visa program to improve conditions for all workers. The program was designed in cooperation with the United Farm Workers and through the close consultation with farmers, farmworkers, unions, and other stakeholders.

We're also dedicated to an additional 11,500 H-2B nonagricultural temporary work visas to open opportunities for workers from Haiti and northern—north Central American countries. Mexico, Guatemala, Canada, and Spain are also making commitments today to expand labor pathways to their countries as well.

And in addition to securing our border and bringing order to the asylum processing in the United States, the Department of Homeland Security is leading a first-of-its-kind campaign to disrupt human smuggling in the region. If you prey on desperate and vulnerable migrants for profit, we are coming for you. We are coming after you.

In the first 2 months of our antismuggling campaign, the United States has worked with our partner nations to raid stash houses, impound vehicles used smuggling operation—for use for smuggling operations, and we made more than 1,800 arrests. And as we speak, Mexico and the United States are conducting what is known as mirror patrols: joint operations to interdict criminals attempting to illegally move drugs and migrants across our borders.

This is just a start. There's—much more work remains, to state the obvious. Every country needs to work together to maintain a humane and orderly immigration process, to invest in securing the borders, screening and registering migrants who enter their countries, and repatriating those that do not qualify to remain.

I hope more countries will see the potential for joining the Los Angeles Declaration. And I want to thank all of my fellow leaders on this stage for committing to this historic new vision for our region.

And now I'd like to invite President Lasso of Ecuador to say a few words. And thank you all very, very much for your patience.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:44 p.m. at the Los Angeles Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, remarks announcing in Los Angeles, CA.

*Locations:* Los Angeles, CA.

*Names:* Chaves Robles, Rodrigo; Grandi, Flippo; Lasso Mendoza, Guillermo.

*Subjects:* California : President's visit; Coronavirus pandemic, international cooperation efforts; Costa Rica : President; Defense and national security : Border security; Drug abuse and trafficking : Foreign narcotics traffickers; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Ecuador : President; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Foreign policy, U.S. : Humanitarian assistance programs; Immigration and naturalization : Foreign nationals and refugees, U.S. admission policy; Immigration and naturalization : Illegal immigration; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Immigration and naturalization : Refugees; Labor issues : Unions :: Labor movement and organized labor; Law enforcement and crime : Trafficking in persons, efforts to combat; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and invasion; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion; United Nations : Refugees, High Commissioner on; Western Hemisphere : Migration flows, international cooperation; World Bank.

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